

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



Community Involvement Training Conference

2009

CALL FOR PRESENTERS

**Reaching Across Boundaries:
Sharing Challenges and Opportunities**

**August 18 - 20, 2009
Seattle, Washington**

Visit the conference website: www.epa.gov/ciconference

You are invited to submit a presentation proposal for the eleventh U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Community Involvement Training Conference, which will be held August 18–20, 2009 in Seattle, Washington. This dynamic conference brings together public participation and community involvement professionals from throughout EPA and EPA's federal, state, tribal and local partners. Proposals must be received by **February 20, 2009**.

The theme for the 2009 conference is, "Reaching across Boundaries: Sharing Challenges and Opportunities." The theme acknowledges that boundaries exist all around us and can pose challenges to effectively solving environmental problems. However, if stakeholders can move across boundaries, they can identify mutual challenges and opportunities that can lead to sustainable environmental benefits. During the conference we will explore communication skills and processes, organizational/institutional issues and behavioral shifts as ways to reach across boundaries to achieve these environmental benefits.

About the Conference

This annual conference is for EPA managers, project staff and partners who plan and implement community involvement, partnership, stewardship, outreach and education programs. Over 450 people are expected to participate in the conference, which includes plenary sessions, information sessions, training workshops of various lengths (three, four, or seven hours), field trips, an exhibit area, a poster session, evening activities and many networking opportunities.

Presentation Types and Topics

In keeping with our conference theme, we are asking you to propose a presentation focusing on challenges and opportunities within one of the following "boundaries:"

Communications Boundaries

- Communicating effectively to reduce barriers related to language, cultural, social and economic issues

- Communicating scientific/technical concepts in an understandable way (e.g., risk communication, treatment technologies and processes, contaminated groundwater)
- Using new technologies to overcome communications barriers (e.g., GIS, cell phones, Internet, social media, Web 2.0)
- Acknowledging and understanding the role of psychology when dealing with communities (e.g., the use of apology, impact of stress on communities, being transparent and empathetic, non-verbal communication)
- Planning for and facilitating dialogue to build consensus or to continue the participation process

Institutional/Organizational Boundaries

- Working across federal, state and local programs through partnerships, collaborative efforts and agreements
- Coordinating and cooperating with other nations (e.g., U.S./Canada, U.S./Tribal Nations, U.S./Mexico)
- Addressing program-specific challenges and opportunities (e.g., evaluation of program effectiveness, organizational integrity, new Administration perspective and priorities)

Behavioral and Emotional Boundaries

- Resolving conflict
- Modifying/changing behaviors as they relate to human health and environmental issues
- Understanding group dynamics (e.g., emotional intelligence, group behaviors)

We are seeking proposals that demonstrate collaborative and participatory community involvement approaches, share successful tools, techniques and lessons learned, and bring together people with diverse perspectives to discuss challenges and opportunities presented by shared boundaries. You can propose a presentation for a:

- Ninety-minute information session for case studies, panel discussions or examples of unique approaches for educating, involving and empowering communities to participate in environmental issues;
- Three-, four- or seven-hour training workshop to teach a novice, intermediate or advanced skill; or
- Four-hour field trips to see first-hand how involving the community can achieve the desired environmental result.

When developing your proposal, keep in mind the conference offers sessions of interest to both novice and experienced participants in the field of community involvement, public outreach and education. Please be creative in designing and preparing your presentation and consider methods to fully engage the participants, such as role playing, discussion questions or interactive exercises. Finally, people learn better when diverse viewpoints are presented so you might consider including a community member, representative from the regulated community and/or tribal, state or local government partner in your proposal and presentation.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Proposals must be submitted in writing and conform to the application instructions. Proposals will be evaluated on all of the following criteria. Successful presentation proposals will:

- Contribute to EPA's commitment to finding ways to foster and encourage community involvement, partnerships, outreach, stewardship and/or environmental education.

How to Submit a Proposal

Proposal applications are due by the close of business February 20, 2009. Visit the conference web site at www.epa.gov/ciconference and complete the interactive on-line proposal application. You also may download the proposal application/instructions (as a WordPerfect, MS Word or PDF document), answer the application questions and then submit your proposal by email. If you cannot use either of these approaches, please contact our conference coordinator, Environmental Management Support, by email at ciconference@emsus.com or by phone at 301-589-5318.

- Be relevant to community involvement/outreach challenges and demonstrate how the challenges were met.
- Involve multiple perspectives by either including diverse stakeholders or presenting alternate views.
- Provide a plan that clearly shows how the presenter(s) intend to actively engage the audience.
- Have goals that are clearly specified and achievable for the length of the proposed session.
- Relate to the conference theme.

For training proposals, two additional criteria will be used:

- The proposed topic and presentation will enhance the skills of participants and/or provide participants with useful tools.
- The presenters have experience making successful public presentations.

Other Opportunities to Participate or Present at the Conference

If you do not want to submit a formal presentation, consider other options, such as:

- Submitting a poster application for the conference poster session, during which you can discuss your poster topic with participants.
- Displaying an exhibit in the conference exhibit area.



What Else You Need to Know

Session Length: There will be twelve 90-minute concurrent information sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, August 18 and 19. The rest of the sessions will consist of two 3-hour trainings/tutorials, ten 4-hour trainings/tutorials and four 7-hour trainings. Field trips are four hours or less.

Registration: All presenters and co-presenters must register for the conference and non-EPA presenters need to pay a conference fee (in the \$130-\$150 range). The conference fee is discounted for presenters.

Travel Reimbursement: Environmental Management Support, Inc., EPA's conference planning contractor, has limited funding available to reimburse the travel-related expenses (airfare, lodging, and meals) for one speaker for each training or information session (non-federal government presenters only). These speakers

must arrange and pay for all their travel-related expenses up front and will be reimbursed for expenses after the conference. You must request this assistance to be considered for travel reimbursement.

Audio-Visual Equipment: Presenters are encouraged to use a computer and LCD projector to show all of their presentation materials. Computers with PowerPoint viewer software (or other needed software) and LCD projectors will be provided in all session rooms. If additional equipment is needed, please note your equipment request on the application form.

Proposal Application/Instructions Available On-line: Visit www.epa.gov/ciconference to complete the on-line proposal application. You also can download the application form and instructions, complete your application and submit it by email.

Conference Contacts

Freya Margand **2009 EPA Conference Chair**

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Jeff Philip **EPA Conference Co-Chair**

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Proposals due February 20, 2009

**Complete on-line application or download application form
and instructions at www.epa.gov/ciconference**